

## **Advice from the Equal Opportunity Commissioners about dangers of discrimination and disadvantage during university's special operation**

In the course of the Covid-19 safety precautions the universities equal opportunity work has new challenges to solve. The *KFG AG for respect and against sexual discrimination and violence* has collected the problems and developed a guideline. We advise you to announce and implement the measures listed upon to all employees and students in your working field.

### Online-stalking, sexual harassment and racist discrimination via digital media

Due to the rapid changeover from teaching in person to online teaching, University members started over to not only using the official online tools provided by University (online meetings via BigBlueButton or DFN, forum and blubber function in Stud.IP etc.) but to partly use private contact addresses such as Skype, WhatsApp or Facebook. This increases the risk of people being stalked, bullied, discriminated and harassed through these private contacts.

- **All lecturers are requested to use only those tools and formats officially offered by university.**
- **Students are indicated that they are not obligated to give away their private cell phone number, Email, Facebook or other private contact addresses.**

Also from the Stud.IP forum discriminating comments have been reported.

▪ **Everyone who established a forum is advised to check it regularly, to be able to react to discriminating comments. If such a statement is found an explicit feedback has to follow, which explains that such comments will not be tolerated. Such discriminating behaviour can then be reported to the responsible Equal Opportunity Commissioner or the ConTakt counseling center to discuss the further approach.**

▪ ***At the beginning of every online event, it should be addressed that respectful contact rules also apply to online communication. Based on §6 of the basic order of the university "Anti-discrimination and participation: In the perception of its duties and responsibilities the university is geared to the principle of diversity. The members and organs are especially focussed on the equal treatment of all people and the abolishment of disadvantage due to inequalities. They take care, that no one will be discriminated based on gender, the attributive race or ethnic affiliation, a***

***disability or chronic disease, the origin, the religious and political beliefs or a sexual identity or orientation.***“

▪ **All participants in online formats must be made aware that they, in order to protect in their privacy, don't have to turn on their cameras (see Email of the Vice President for Studies, teaching and international affairs from August 18, 2020).**

#### Problems of understanding due to online formats

Since not all employees of the university as well as the students are equipped with good microphones / headsets, the sound quality in online teaching is often mediocre. Especially, people with impaired hearing or people whose mother tongue is not German, can have problems following the matter of subject.

- **Questions about understanding should always be answered respectfully.**
- **The staff should be indicated that both Stud.IP and BBB can set to English by changing it in the navigation menu.**

#### Insecurity in empty buildings

Also for the few employees and students who have to work in the rooms of the university the special operation times of the university created a new situation: deserted, sometimes bad illuminated corridors, stairs and parking areas are the norm. This can quickly create a feeling of uncertainty.

- **The university is making efforts to improve the lighting within the buildings and outside areas.**
- **Please report poor lighting conditions such as missing or too short settings of presence detectors, misplaced light switches (e.g. in the middle of corridors instead of on beginning) or unlit routes on the campus to the responsible department.**

#### Bullying and discrimination against employees in the home office

With the relaxation of the Corona security measures, there are increasing cases of bullying and discrimination based on risk assessment. On one hand, employees, who (medically certified!) belong to risk groups and therefore staying longer in home office, are partly bullied and discredited as unwilling to work by colleagues, who work face-to-face again. On the other hand, there can arise an increased workload for employees in attendance, if some work cannot be done in home office.

- **Work in the home office is basically to be classified as equivalent to face-to-face work.**
- **Possible conflicts should be addressed openly and immediately in order to find solutions together.**

▪**Discrimination and bullying will not be tolerated. Please contact one of the below listed advice centers.**

Students and employees with family responsibilities (child or relative care)

▪**Students:** Lecturers and other employees in the faculties and in administration, who are involved in the organization of the degree programs, are asked to take into account special circumstances of the students with family tasks, such as e.g. scheduling appointments, admission to courses, by replacing online events in real time through the use of asynchronous teaching elements and to find individual solutions to compensate for disadvantages such as the extension of submission deadlines or alternative forms of examination. The aim is to enable students with family responsibilities to study successfully despite the greater burden during the corona pandemic.

▪**Young scientist:** It is to be feared that the corona pandemic will have a long-term negative effect on the research results and publication lists of young scientists with family responsibilities. Therefore, tasks and deadlines should be coordinated at chairs, in research teams and projects in such a way that family obligations and business matters are equally taken into account and tasks are distributed in teams in solidarity. Options for extending submission deadlines, e.g. for applications, evaluations or the submission of research results should be considered and transitional financing and extension options for contracts should be exhausted.

▪**Technical and administrative staff:** Due to the current challenging situation, for technical and administrative staff with family tasks managers should work with the employees to find the best possible solutions and make full use of the options for combining work and family responsibilities. Supervisors should be supported by using family-oriented and collegial coordination between superiors and employees with regard to working in the home office and returning to the workplace at the university, the accessibility and in a respective scope of tasks.

With all supported offers, it is crucial to communicate them well! The university's family service will advise and support you on these issues.

Regulation for pregnant and breastfeeding women

▪**The general entry ban for pregnant women and breastfeeding students and employees is lifted. The usual processes for creating and evaluating risk assessments apply to this group of people.**

▪**In the event of pregnancy, students should contact the maternity protection team of the matriculation office in Department 3 directly [mutterschutz.studierende@uol.de](mailto:mutterschutz.studierende@uol.de).**

The Examination Office will advise you on any questions about compensation for disadvantages when taking an exam or waiving the statutory maternity leave period.

*If you need more information or if you are affected by discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment there are various contact persons you can turn to. We can find individual solutions and there is no need to act if you don't want to follow up on incidents, just report and talk about them. All conversations will of course be treated confidentially.*

Contact persons are:

The decentralized Equal Opportunities Commissioners:

<https://uol.de/gleichstellungsstelle/dezentrale-gleichstellungsbeauftragte>

The central equal opportunities commissioner: <https://uol.de/gleichstellungsstelle>

The ConTakt advice center: <https://uol.de/contact-beratungsstelle>

The conflict advice center: <https://uol.de/konfliktberatungsstelle>

The family service: <https://uol.de/familienservice>

The department for occupational safety: <https://uol.de/arbeitssicherheit/>

The AStA's first point of contact for discrimination and bullying: <https://asta-oldenburg.de/erstanlaufstelle-diskriminierung/>

Orders and Guidelines

Basic order of the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg:

[https://uol.de/uni/amtliche\\_mitteilungen/dateien/AM2016-02\\_01\\_Neufassung\\_Grundordnung.pdf](https://uol.de/uni/amtliche_mitteilungen/dateien/AM2016-02_01_Neufassung_Grundordnung.pdf)

Directive against Sexual Discrimination and Violence:

[https://uol.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/gss/download/Richtlinie\\_19.11.08.pdf](https://uol.de/fileadmin/user_upload/gss/download/Richtlinie_19.11.08.pdf)

Regulation of the Commission for Research Impact Assessment and ethics of the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg:

[https://uol.de/uni/amtliche\\_mitteilungen/dateien/AM2017-012\\_Ordnung\\_Kommission\\_Forschungsfolgenabschaetzung.pdf](https://uol.de/uni/amtliche_mitteilungen/dateien/AM2017-012_Ordnung_Kommission_Forschungsfolgenabschaetzung.pdf)

Order for the operation of web servers and business use of the internet and intranet at Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg: <https://verwaltungsportal.uni-oldenburg.de/p/hub#/file/83a9a42204b744bfb0a5da1220674940>

Order for private use of the Internet and the intranet at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg by members, relatives and third parties: <https://verwaltungsportal.uni-oldenburg.de/p/hub#/file/4148224c777c4220861b15b5e73df7f1>